

Present: Dwight Baker; Andy Bennett; Hans Brandal; John Coney, Vice-Chair; Dick Burkhart; Ray Day, Jr.; Dave Elliott, Chair; John Jensen; Sandy Paul-Lyle; Holly Plackett; Anirudh Sahni; Joan Sells; Mike Taylor

Staff: Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner; Kevin Desmond, General Manager

Dave Elliott called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting with Kevin Desmond

Desmond addressed the TAC draft letter on bus shelters. He said he is hoping to expand the role of bus shelters in marketing and rider information. He would also like signage to match the colorful Metro buses, and to be more informative for the regular and new rider (in particular, he noted that Metro's bus signs do not even provide a telephone number or website). He would like more information in the shelters about possible destinations. His eventual goal is getting Metro to think about bus stops in the same way we think about rail stations – a colorful, safe, enjoyable place to wait for a bus ride.

Desmond noted the impact of more bus shelters on operating costs. The rule of thumb is that every 10 to 15 bus shelters requires at least one employee for maintenance.

Desmond also discussed possible partnerships between Metro and other local jurisdictions, and between Metro and private corporations. Of particular interest are the contracts between advertising agencies and transit companies in other parts of the country. The advertising agency assumes responsibility for the shelter, shelter maintenance and advertising, within guidelines agreed to between the transit provider and the agency. Profits are split, and Desmond said this has turned into a major revenue source for several transit agencies. He noted that these kinds of partnerships are one way for local jurisdictions to get beyond the 40-40-20 split for new transit revenues.

Sells raised the issue of rural areas, such as Vashon Island, where there are few bus shelters. How would such a program help there? Desmond responded that it would not help directly, but indirectly Metro would have more resources to use for rural areas. Coney offered another model: the "sponsored stop," with a single business purchasing the advertising rights to a particular stop. The model might be more acceptable to Seattle. Burkhart raised the question of advertising boundaries. Desmond said that agencies can write any type of guidelines into the advertising contract. It is important that the advertising reflect community standards and not detract from Metro's "image."

Desmond also provided a brief report on Smartcard. The beta test will start in September and run in three phases. The first phase will involve Metro employees. The second phase, in October, will use regular riders in south and central Seattle. The final phase will be an "institutional" program. Taylor asked if the TAC could be included in the employee group and Desmond said he would find out.

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Bus Shelter Letter

TAC edited and finalized a letter about bus shelters, and directed Dave Elliott, John Coney and Holly Plackett to deliver the letter to the Regional Transit Committee at their next meeting scheduled for April 19th. (see attached)

Kent-Auburn transit proposals

Sandy Paul-Lyle gave a report on the conclusion of the Kent-Auburn Sounding Board. Final proposals will be sent to the Transportation Committee on April 26th. Paul-Lyle said it had been a good process and she is looking forward to improved bus service in South King County.

Chair Term Limits

Members discussed a proposal by Chair Dave Elliott (see attached) to amend the by-laws to extend the chair's term to six months. Under the by-laws, the proposed amendment must be introduced at one meeting and voted upon at a second meeting. The group agreed to vote on the matter at the May meeting.

Adjournment

Elliott adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

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The Honorable Reagan Dunn, Chair
Regional Transit Committee
King County Courthouse
KCC-CC-1200
500 – Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Dunn:

As an advisory group to the Regional Transit Committee, the King County Metro Transit Advisory Committee is working on the issue of improved bus shelters as an important element of maintaining ridership and encouraging new ridership within the Metro service area.

All members of the Transit Advisory Committee are active bus riders. These suggestions reflect our experiences as Metro patrons.

We ask the Council to establish a goal within the Six Year Plan that Metro will make a net gain of 70 additional shelters each year. Currently there are over 400 stops eligible for new shelters. The current net gain each year is far lower than 70 and insignificant compared to the 9500 bus stops in the system.

We encourage the Council to update the dual area criteria (i.e., bus shelters are provided to bus stops with 25 daily boarders in the suburbs and 50 boarders in the city) to reflect both the number of boardings and the length of rider wait times. If wait times are taken into account, the suburbs would be compensated and everybody would be treated equally.

Illuminated shelters are an incentive for people who don't currently use Metro Transit to wait for a bus with a feeling of greater security. Both shelter lighting and nearby pedestrian lighting are great crime deterrents. Public behavior is generally more civil in lighted areas. We encourage the use of solar panels to keep lighting costs low.

We would further recommend a new revenue source which could grow with the region and with the number of shelters.

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We ask the Council to explore bus shelter advertising as a revenue source that could be used to increase the number of shelters. Such revenues need to be dedicated to funding capital costs and maintenance for the bus shelters. A visual compromise solution might be to have regulated “sponsored” bus stops with fixed size logos. Because policy regarding bus shelter advertising often resides with local jurisdictional sign codes, we urge the King County Council to work with local communities to explore the benefits of bus shelter advertising through pilot projects and other innovative partnerships and approaches.

We encourage the Council to explore transportation benefit districts as a revenue source that could be used to increase the number of shelters. We understand that these districts derive from a bill authorized by this year's legislature and can help cities or even neighborhoods to fund needed improvements.

Bus shelters are an essential element to first class transit service in King County. Please remember, every bus trip starts at a bus stop. Let's make a good first impression.

The King County Metro Transit Advisory Committee strongly recommends that Metro move towards providing shelter at every bus stop.

Sincerely,

David Elliott, Chair
King County Metro Transit Advisory Committee

CC: The Honorable Ron Sims, King County Executive
The Honorable Julia Patterson, Chair, Transportation Committee, King County Council
Members, Regional Transit Committee
The Honorable Jan Drago, Chair, Seattle City Council Transportation Committee
The Honorable Grant Degginger, Mayor, City of Bellevue
Harold Taniguchi, Director, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT)
Laurie Brown, Deputy Director, KCDOT
Kevin Desmond, General Manager, Metro Transit Division, KCDOT
Victor Obeso, Deputy General Manager, Metro Transit Division, KCDOT
David Hull, Supervisor, Service Planning, Metro Transit Division, KCDOT
Betty Gulledge-Bennett, Supervisor, Community Relations and Communications, KCDOT

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METRO TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Proposal: Tenure of Chair/Vice Chair Positions: to officially change the current terms of the Chair and Vice Chair from the current three (3) months to six (6) months.

Rationale:

- The present Chair and Vice Chair sit for three (3) meetings, i.e. once a month, for an approximate eight (8) hours of discussion at a maximum.
- Three (3) meetings in subject term of office does not provide any Chair sufficient time to bring most subjects to completion – or provide the necessary continuity to allow for an acceptable conclusion in a reasonable period of time.

During the course of one year, a particularly involved subject will have 4 Chairs and 4 Vice Chairs. This is viewed as problematic and a downside to the value of such leadership positions and their constructive influence on the business of the Committee, leading to final decisions and/or conclusions.

I have served on multiple committees and commissions (several occasions as Chair) for 15 years and all such leadership positions were for at least a minimum of one year, particularly those of Chair.

- It is noted that the TAC Bylaws state that the Chair/Vice Chair are one-year terms. Thus, there would be no major change to our existing Bylaws.

Conclusion: At this time, the undersigned highly recommends that the above stated proposal be put forth to the Committee in an effort to gain concurrence within our full Committee – or (in the interest of time) a final decision made by the TAC Liaison.

Submitted by: David M. Elliott
Chair
April 4, 2006